The Commonweal

October 12, 1951

For a Policy of True Humanism

The West should reaffirm its belief in human rights

CHARLES MALIK

Out of the Darkness

A report from the Belgian Congo

ANDREW FRANCIS

Appeal to the People

DONALD ATTWATER

Volume LV **15c** *Number 1*

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"...Let Your Petitions Be Made Known to God"

ST. PAUL
PHIL. 4:6

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Editor: Edward S. Skillin
Contributing Editor: Philip Burnham
Managing Editor: Edward F. Meagher
Feature Editor: John Cogley
Assistant Editor: William Pfaff

Associate Editors:
John C. Cort, Anne Fremantle, Francis Downing
Cinema: Philip T. Hartung
Theatre: Walter Kerr

Advertising Manager: John Brubaker

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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

Anti-Communism in a Shattered World

IN OUR struggle with the Soviet Union the United States is rapidly reaching the point of placing all hope on arms alone. When the USSR proved treacherous as an ally at the war's end, we turned with some hope to the United Nations. After this in turn had proved no more efficacious, we began determinedly to rearm. Negotiations were in vain. Six month's ago deputy foreign ministers could not reach an agreement with the USSR even on an agenda for a meeting.

On the other side of the globe the performance has been repeated; the Kaesong truce talks and break-offs in negotiations have strung out endlessly. These impasses, coupled with the strengthening of our European alliances and our growing military might, have brought this nation to the present point of putting all its hopes on firepower. What remains to be decided is the dominant form in which that power will be held in readiness; Secretary Lovett and the Joint Chiefs are now strong for putting all our eggs in the atomic basket.

With the conviction that the USSR can be stopped and war avoided by an overwhelming demonstration of armed strength, all else has been relegated to the background. Few of our leaders appear at all concerned about the assault on public morale by continual revelations of widespread corruption in office recently. The Voice of America constitutes a distinctly minor element in our cold-war calculations. So, too, the dwindling ECA and small-scale Point IV programs. The war in Korea goes on under UN auspices, but for the most part the United Nations plays but a small part in our ideas as to how security is to be attained.

Force, then, is our one answer to the menace of the Soviets. And there are few voices in America that question this solution. The need for adequate defenses has silenced most anxieties. History has repeatedly demonstrated that arms races lead to wars, that peace cannot be maintained by arms alone; yet our atomic stockpile and and productive plant embody all our present hopes. Our political leaders and the public press might give more thought to the years ahead. For if arms provide immediate defenses, they supply no guarantee that enemy, neutral or even allied peoples will come to a sufficiently harmonious way of thinking for us to get along together.

At this critical juncture Catholics in this country would do well to re-examine their time-honored predilection for Red-baiting. Does the country stand in greater need of additional voices in the chorus of denunciation of the Soviets or of constructive Christian ideas? A similar question may be asked in respect to the great wide world, shattered by war, poverty, hatred and doubt.

This is a question of prime pertinence for the Catholic press. What proportion and emphasis in our pages are given over to denunciation of Soviet iniquities? The occasions for such diatribes are many. There are present and past Communist affiliations to be exposed and excoriated. There is Soviet propaganda to attack. And then there are the crimes and cruelties in the satellite countries and the USSR which merit the most violent condemnation. All this seems to culminate in relentless persecution of the Church. The material on which to document denunciation of the Communists is plentiful.

THE question is how serviceable and appropriate it is for Catholic journalists to make this their chief emphasis in times like these. The world is sore afflicted; it cries out for consolation, guidance, peace, security and a new way of life. It stands in the greatest need of the good tidings of Christianity and their implications for the family, in politics and throughout human society. But for many people, sterile anti-Communism has become the hallmark of Catholicism; it is the one characteristic note of our periodicals, sermons, academic addresses, speeches at Communion

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breakfasts. In many minds anti-Communism is actually a synonym for Catholic Action.

It should give us pause that as men in their desperate need have stretched out their hands for life-giving bread, we Christians have been offering them the dead stone of anti-Communism.

Secrecy Order

IT IS A good sign that few things can cause a greater furore in this country than a threat to freedom of speech or to freedom of the press. These freedoms are essential for the preservation of our other human freedoms.

The outcry which greeted the President's Executive Order, extending the restrictions on information about the Department of Defense to civilian departments of the Government, had a highly partisan tone. Mr. Truman's political opponents ventured the opinion that such restrictions would be utilized to cover up any information embarrassing to the Administration. And they had as an immediate exhibit the order to employees of the Office of Price Stabilization to withhold any information "that might cause embarrassment." The fact that this OPS order was quickly countermanded by the President failed to quiet their fears.

The dangers of this procedure were stretched to an even more serious point at meetings of the nation's newspaper editors. These men vigorously expressed the fear that, with such opportunities for maintaining silence, the Government would get to the point of releasing about its doings only such information as it deemed good for the people to know, á la Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin or Peron.

When an order is couched in such terms and drawn up under specifications which would make it all too easy to cover up an administration's failings on the grounds of national security, it should be carefully re-examined.

For one thing the reasons for such extraordinary precautions should be made a great deal plainer. In our American system restrictions on information automatically meet with stubborn resistance. And, as even in wartime, the United States functions as a democracy, the press and the people would be justified in demanding an explanation that will establish a good and sufficient reason for this presidential order. It is not enough to declare that it will seldom be invoked.

One advantage with such decrees is that they can be revised or revoked without the delays which invariably accompany debates in Congress. When an order from the President stirs up the opposition of representatives and rank-and-file from both parties, he may then issue a new directive, more workable and more acceptable to all concerned. There is no clue yet as to the fate of this current secrecy decree.

The way it was presented was clearly a political mistake. What might save things all round would be a modification of the President's order, particularly if he would utilize the occasion to present a convincing case for such civilian restrictions at this time.

• NEXT WEEK •

ROBERT BARRAT writes of Marcel Légaut, a learned French professor who became a peasant and a solitary.

"Without trying to make the French peasantry the model of all virtues, M. Légaut came to the conclusion that it is in the peasant milieu that the age-old qualities of the French race are best preserved: humility, frugality, a willingness to brave dangers, coupled with genuine prudence, physical and moral strength, common sense."

Goodbye to Abadan

FOR months Britain has played a losing game in Iran. Mistake followed mistake until the situation drew quite beyond British control. First the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, long operator of their big refinery at Abadan and of the principal Iranian oil fields, misjudged the situation. The company sought to hold on to a royalty rate to which it had long been accustomed. In being bull-headed about their take, the company lost every chance of making any deal whatever.

When the British Government directly intervened, it proceeded on its part to contribute to the tragedy of errors. The basic mistake in judgment would appear to be an under-estimate of the nationalistic passions of the people of Iran. In any case the British brought every sort of economic and political pressure to bear, thereby weakening Iran and stiffening determination to eject them. It is significant that Premier Mohammed Mossadegh, after experiencing considerable opposition in his parliament in recent weeks,

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was informed by his opponents as he left Teheran to plead his country's case before the United Nations, that they were all solidly behind him in the matter.

The British, it would appear, as they yield to an Iranian ultimatum and withdraw their last men from Abadan, are leaving few political friends behind them. They are already negotiating with the Rumanians for oil to replace what they have lost.

Now that the last of the British have cleared out, the Security Council sessions on Iran would seem to be an anti-climax. Not all the resolutions in the world will put the British back into the Iranian oilfields. What is left is a matter of face, and perhaps of financial adjustments of some sort. A contract was violated by Iran and the International Court of Justice issued a restraining judgment which the Government of Iran ignored. Mr. Mossadegh has to justify his nation in these matters. The practical consequences of such testimony are rather difficult to imagine, for Britain's long-profitable oil venture in Iran appears finished.

Perhaps there is one good consequence which may result. What happens to Iran as a whole has always been of far greater moment than the fate of their rich oilfields. The expulsion of the British, then, may lead to immediate consideration of Iran's present plight. Perhaps the Point IV program for Iran which American Ambassador Henry F. Grady is reported to have promised with such assurance and in such detail will at last be forthcoming.

To compound the loss of the Iranian oilfields by losing that area of the Middle East through an internal collapse would be a body blow to the West. Iran is economically weaker than ever because of its contest with the British. Desperately needed revenues have been cut off at the source, loss of employment has further harried an already under-employed and impoverished people. The Tudeh, or Communist, Party is the strongest organization in the country, while Soviet Russia stands ready at the northern threshold.

Under such conditions it would seem folly to neglect the restive and impoverished people of Iran any longer. A Point IV agreement would serve not as a reward for throwing the British out but as a means of stabilizing a desperate nation at the fringe of the Iron Curtain. That is to put the idea in coldly political terms. But the people of Iran are assuredly among those who should have their chance.

Act of Restitution

THE action taken by Chancellor Adenauer and the West German Parliament in expressing their desire to make restitution to the Jewish people for the crimes committed against them during the Hitler regime gives one an increased sense of confidence in the new German Republic. It is heartening to know that a legislative body can turn itself to its obligations of justice and charity even when it is sitting in the center of a power struggle that seems, at times, about to become a hurricane of hate and irrationality.

It has always been one of the unspoken assumptions of extreme totalitarianism that screaming, villification and hatred pay off eventually, because sooner or later the opposition is dragged down to this level, too, and then sheer brute savageness will triumph. Hitler and his followers did a great deal to try to prove this theory and as we know, it has not yet been permanently disproved. It is a sickening thing to think about, as sickening as the bake ovens at Buchenwald, and perhaps the German people, better than any other, has had an opportunity to know what it means.

We may hope that nothing will prevent the carrying out of this act of restitution to the Jewish people, because it will mean much to us in our continuing effort to show that there is something in man more powerful and appealing than hate.

Disagreement

AT THE Governors' Conference in Tennessee, Governor James F. Byrnes of South Carolina asked a question of one of the guest speakers, Mr. Charles E. Wilson, the present Director of Defense Mobilization (a job that Mr. Byrnes held during the Second World War). "Don't you think," Mr. Byrnes asked, that "the only way you can stop inflation is to establish a line and hold it regardless of inequities that it may cause?"

Mr. Wilson replied, "I think that is the only hope for the economic salvation of the country." But, Mr. Wilson explained, the Congress has given him a Defense Production Act which makes it impossible for him to hold a firm wage-price line because the Act does not provide for tight controls.

This means that the two men who have been most responsible for, and had the most exper-

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ience in, handling our economy during the stress periods of war and rearmament believe that we have the wrong policy on controls at the present time. As Governor Byrnes remarked, "The experience of the last war proved that until you do that [establish a line and hold it] there is no way to stop the spiral of inflation."

"I agree," said Mr. Wilson. "The dog will continue to chase its tail and never catch up."

So we may assume from this that we cannot stop inflation today because Congress has not passed a law good enough to do the job.

One might be inclined to question this appeal for strong controls if Mr. Wilson and Mr. Byrnes were well-known socialists or even advocates of a tightly controlled economy. But the fact is, both of them are well-known conservatives and both of them are vehemently opposed to any and all Government controls that are not absolutely necessary.

The National Association of Manufacturers, through a spokesman, once accused Mr. Wilson of having been captured by the New Deal crowd, the implication being that there is nothing wrong with the economy that the law of supply and demand can't fix. But meanwhile, prices climb and wages follow, all because we must hold to the theory of a free market.

Usually it is the liberals who are said to be doctrinaire, holding to a theory even when circumstances point to its unworkableness, but this time it is hardly the liberals who can be blamed. It begins to look as if it was the Congress that was captured, not Mr. Wilson, and not by the New Dealers.

This is a high-level disagreement that is likely to prove expensive all around. It is hard to believe that the Congress has acted wisely in rejecting the advice of two of our most experienced economic mobilizers.

Reflections

IN THE past several months, the people of the United States have had what amounts to a kind of mirror held up to themselves and a good deal of what they have seen of their collective image has not been pleasing to the eye. In fact, what they have seen has fitted together bit by bit into something of a pattern of corruption. There have been the Kefauver revelations of gambling and its inroads into local government; stories of influence peddling with the RFC; irregularities among Internal Revenue agents and, in one case, an irregularity involving a General officer of the Army; the West Point scandal; the tie-in between gambling and college basketball; the trafficking in dope, especially at the teen-age level.

It would seem that as a nation we should be concerned about all this. Some months ago one Senator recalled publicly that the historian Arnold Toynbee had found, after considerable research, that more civilizations crumbled from internal disintegration than from external attack, but even so it did not seem that this thought struck any terror into the American people. Nevertheless there is evidence that some Americans are genuinely worried over what they have heard and seen; others have been trying to assure themselves that graft and corruption have always gone on and that there is nothing to get excited about just because it is all coming to light. Others try to make politics out of it all, turning over every story of dishonesty to see how it can be made to serve to the advantage of one party or the other. But whatever the attitude each of us may have taken, it is quite apparent that the country has been affected by what it has seen of itself and that its self-confidence has in some measure diminished.

It is said that this is unfortunate, because how can we preach democracy and freedom and the American Way to the rest of the world if we have doubts about the very words we are using? Mr. George Kennan, perhaps as accomplished a student of foreign policy as any we have in the country, has said that he would advise us not to try to think of ourselves as saving the rest of the world, not to try to do more than we can rightly handle; it is enough, Mr. Kennan believes, for us to try to save ourselves, to put our own house in order, and if we do that, the others will want to follow us out of respect for our moral integrity. In that way, the United States will have no trouble exerting its power and influence properly throughout the world.

Foreign policy, then, and the great questions of war and peace, come back to the state of domestic affairs and in the last analysis, our domestic health is a matter of our individual, personal behavior. In an era when bigness seems to be everywhere—big states, big bombs, big factories, big crime—the much talked-about little man holds the secret of power in his own person, and it may be that he will come to realize that fact more and more and that he will face up to his responsibility as he must.

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For a Policy of True Humanism

The West is in need of a dynamic message to fire the imagination of the non-Communist world.

By CHARLES MALIK

FOR three years now the Commission on Human Rights has been engaged in the elaboration of what we call a "Covenant on Human Rights." Whatever may be the legal value of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Covenant is to go further than the Declaration: (a) it will define, with a greater degree of legal precision, at least some of the rights proclaimed in the Declaration; (b) it will include certain international measures of implementation aiming either at the promotion of these rights, or at the supervision of their implementation within the contracting states; and (c) it will be open for signature and ratification by member states, so that those who adhere to it will be legally bound by its terms.

The chief issue in this enterprise has been whether economic, social and cultural rights should be included in the first Covenant to be drawn up. The United States and the United Kingdom have so far favored the inclusion only of the well-known traditional political, civil and personal rights in the first Covenant. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, together with a vast majority of the members of the United Nations, insisted that economic, social and cultural rights should have their place in the very first Covenant.

This suggests that the Western world has not so far articulated a sufficiently dynamic message in the economic, social and cultural field that will fire the imagination of the non-Communist rest of the world. The Communist message in this regard still exerts a strong pull. The problem for the Western world therefore is whether, maintaining and even strengthening its fundamental respect for man and his freedom, which is undoubtedly the most important thing, it can nevertheless summon sufficient boldness of thought and action to convince the rest of the world of its willingness and ability to lead it into an age of plenty, equality and justice.

There are two ultimate dangers besetting present-day preoccupation with the problem of human rights. The first is the possibility of inversion within the total structure of human rights. This is the danger of materialism. Certain rights are assuming exaggerated importance: it is hard to keep them in their place. Who is not clamoring today for his economic rights, for what is called a decent standard of living? Who does not keep hammering upon the so-called underdeveloped areas that only if they introduce modern techniques and develop their natural resources all will be well with them? Indeed there are abuses and injustices and stupidities in modern society that cannot be condoned or overlooked, and up to a certain point the past thoughtless neglect of the material side of existence must be corrected.

But I say "up to a certain point," because there is a deadly danger that in our enthusiasm for economic and social justice we forget that man cannot live by bread alone. The exaggeration of the material and animal side of human life at the expense of the intellectual and spiritual side is one of the great ills of the present day. As if the material by itself can originate anything! Surely a Socrates dissatisfied is infinitely better than a pig satisfied. Surely if it were a matter of choice, I would much rather die as a free man knowing and being in the truth, with any amount of economic and social injustice done to me, than a materially secure and satisfied man with no freedom to seek and see and proclaim the truth, with the edges of my mind dulled and the perceptive powers of my soul darkened.

Nothing is more pathetic these days than the spectacle of a man seeking his happiness in the abundance and determination of material things, and forgetting that joy, satisfaction, rest and salvation are all questions of the spirit. Surely economic and social injustice is a grievous thing, but there is such a thing as intellectual injustice, spiritual injustice, moral injustice, where people live in darkness and rebellion and falsehood; and *this* injustice, *this* violation of one's own humanity, whether perpetrated by oneself or by one's fellows, is infinitely more grievous. The establishment of the proper hierarchy in human rights, the determination of those rights for the sake of which other rights, if need be, must be joyfully sacrificed, this task is as urgent today as the mere enumeration of human rights as a whole.

CHARLES MALIK is the Minister of Lebanon in the United States. He represents his country in the United Nations and is the Chairman of the UN Commission on Human Rights.

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The second danger is the possibility of inverting man's place in the universe. This is the danger of humanism. We have been endlessly speaking of *human* rights, as though there was nothing except man in the universe, as though he was the center of existence. Even if we put each right in its proper place, according to a natural scale of order, even if we guard against materialism, we still may mortally err by worshipping ourselves. It is very well to speak of human rights, but may it not be that these rights have of late been disturbed or disregarded precisely because man—modern man, clever man, proud man, sensuous man, self-sufficient man—has ceased to stand in fear and awe before that which is above him? We shall only pass from suffering to suffering, and from illusion to illusion, if all we do is to concentrate inordinately upon *our* rights: and the future is ahead of us to prove or disprove what I say.

If we have *our* rights, God also has *His* rights over us; and in vain shall we seek *our* rights until, confessing our sins, we recognize in all brokenness and humility the dominion of God over the course of history and of human life.

The crisis of the present ideological situation is that man is not sure of himself. He has conflicting interpretations of his own nature. This is what lends pathos and poignancy to our great debate in the Commission. In general, man is either viewed as wholly derivative from his social and material conditions, including his animal nature, or is regarded as possessing an original *human nature* which enables him, through reason and freedom, not only to exploit and control his material world, but even to rise above himself.

The only proper way of reconciling conflicting interpretations is by viewing them from a higher standpoint, whereby they assume a natural order. This is possible in this case only on the basis of freedom. The philosophies which stress freedom and the spirit are surely able also to give our material needs their proper due; but the philosophies which sink man in the darkness of the subhuman are never able to do justice to freedom. This is why Western free society, constantly criticized and corrected by its own free intellectual and spiritual institutions, can both retain its freedom and fully satisfy the demands of the material and economic; whereas a materialistically determined society can admit the light of freedom only at the cost of its own soul. The free, illumined, regenerate spirit is the only savior of the world.

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THE United States has played a leading role in this business of human rights. The needs of the world are such that you must continue to play this leading role. You simply cannot afford to stand aside; and plunging into the midst of things, you cannot afford to trail behind either. Your words and deeds are carefully watched and weighed by the outside world as they have never been before. This public scrutiny is the inevitable price of historical leadership. And therefore to the extent you will prove in this realm true to the highest you know and are able to be, your leadership will have a ringing and compelling quality about it.

Now America was founded on an act of faith. Without God and Christian charity this country would have been impossible. I therefore believe it will not be by materialism or by humanism that America can champion the cause of human rights, but by a genuine reaffirmation of the spiritual sources of your life. And this will really come about only when you love man because God has first loved and forgiven him.

FROM BRITAIN

Appeal to the People

A FEW days ago, Mr. Attlee, in his quiet way, told the nation that he had asked the King to dissolve parliament, in order that the electors might have an opportunity to signify their continued confidence in the administration; that the King had expressed his assent; and that there would be a general election on October 25.

The next day the BBC told us that it was putting a certain amount of time on the air at the disposal of those political parties (three so far) putting more than fifty candidates in the field, and that the time would be allocated in proportion to the representation of the parties in the present House of Commons. None of them will get a great deal of it. And no party will be able to get more air time by paying for it, or in any other way: apart from the formal election radio addresses, no program of any kind which might influence voting will be allowed on the air.

All very quiet and sensible and gentlemanly, you see. Party organizations, candidates and their agents no doubt are working 24 hours a day; but the electorate in general has so far shown no signs of excitement.

And the appeal to the people, now that it has come, will be the more interesting to watch for that reason. Doubtless as the campaign progresses there will be more obvious signs of concern than there are now, for unquestionably people are far from lacking interest in the upshot. But it is characteristic that quite a bit of this interest arises, not from political conviction, passion or prejudice, but from a sporting curiosity.

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PLENTY of well-informed socialists admit frankly that there is a possibility, not only that the Labor Party will lose the election, but that the Conservatives may get a working majority in the House of Commons. What seems clear is that the battle will be decided in the marginal constituencies, that is, in those electoral divisions which in 1950 were won by Labor with small majorities. And here the tactics of the Liberal Party will be of importance. In my opinion there has lately been an increase of anti-socialist feeling among Liberals; and if the Liberals reduce the number of candidates they put forward (after their slaughter in the last election), the number of electors voting Conservative "to keep the socialists out" may in some places be appreciably increased in consequence. The Labor triumph of 1945 was very considerably helped by the numbers who voted Labor not because they were pro-socialist, but because they were anti-Conservative. In 1951 a merely anti-socialist vote may be a big factor in putting the Conservatives back. A 2 percent swing to the right on the 1950 voting would do it comfortably.

Anti-socialism of this sort is largely among the "non-politicals"; it is not a result of conviction, passion or prejudice, but of experience of socialist legislation and administration as it affects the individual voter—or seems to. But this consideration of course cuts both ways. Very large numbers of people have personally benefited from what is, with gross impropriety, derided by its opponents as the "welfare state": and they are duly grateful. Were I asked to specify the measure for which people are most grateful, and because of which they forgive its enacters much, I should say the national medical service, for all its shortcomings and disadvantages. Such a judgment may surprise Americans and vex the A.M.A.; but it is the judgment of many over here who are not socialists nor themselves necessarily beneficiaries.

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ANOTHER thing that seems clear about this election is that, as it has been put by an observer, it will be fought "with slogans and with personalities rather than with clearly defined policies." One of the strengths of the Labor Party in power has been that it has had clear policies and has implemented them, at any rate domestically. World affairs and the economic situation of Great Britain now make it increasingly difficult to do that, with consequent grave divisions of opinion within the party. On the other hand, this situation does not help the Conservatives to find an appealing policy, something that to so many electors they have seemed to lack. The criticism is probably unfair. In these times not to pretend to clear and cast-iron policies may be a sign of political perspicacity and not of ineffectiveness; but that is not much comfort at election time, unless the voters see it that way too. Maybe they are beginning to. There are signs that—in spite of the inevitable English grumbling—people are ready to stand for a more vigorous handling of "world-defense" problems than the party which includes Aneurin Bevan can easily commit itself to.

"Slogans" can be comparatively easily devised. But when it comes to "personalities," in the pejorative sense of the word or in the other sense, there is one man concerned who stands in a class of his own. It will be a pity, and something of a scandal, if this election degenerates into a struggle of the two parties over the far from prostrate corpse of Winston Churchill. One of the questions currently raised is precisely, if the Conservatives win, will Churchill again become prime minister? It is difficult to imagine that he would not. But to many it is also difficult to imagine that he would not, after a time in office, hand over the reins to Mr. Eden. Churchill is 77 years old, and his health is not too good; and though he still has so much loyalty and love outside his own party, he has many critics within it. Anthony Eden is liked, respected and trusted by many who would never call themselves Conservatives; he is, too, I understand, well regarded in the United States—and that is important for us.

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I HAVE remarked that the announcement of the election was received very quietly, almost with apparent indifference. A couple of days later we were told of the critical state of the King's health. At once the election lost the first place in the headlines of the newspapers; and herein they followed public opinion, for the King immediately became the topic of conversation, in home and at market, in factory and on farm, in pub and railroad train and on the street corner.

The parliamentary election is of great practical concern to the people of this country, collectively and as individuals; it is possible for its outcome to be of importance for the whole world. The death of King George VI, followed automatically by the accession to the throne of Princess Elizabeth, would have no effect on our personal lives, would leave unaltered the principles and policies of Her Majesty's Government, would leave the world situation unchanged. And yet we are at this moment indubitably more concerned about the King than about any general election.

This is not a manifestation of national irresponsibility, an example of that cult of personalities in the public eye that puts so much money into the pockets of publicity agents and journalists. It is rather a visible effect of that intangible but important factor in English life and national psychology, the position of the monarchy. A short article is not the place to try to expound to American readers the mysteries of contemporary British kingship: a considerably more difficult task than for an American to explain to a Britisher the significance of the Flag. I will only say that for Americans who want to understand us it is a crucial point; and in trying to get it clear, help could be found in Canada. It was on your northern border, but well on your side of the 49th parallel, that a group of children, American citizens, hearing that I was from England, at once asked me, "Have you ever seen the king?" Mark you, not "your king," or "King George," or "a king"—but "*the* king." How glad I was to be able to answer "Yes"; but—shades of George III!

DONALD ATTWATER.

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Half Slave and Half Free

IN DANVILLE, Virginia, last spring there was a big strike of the Textile Workers, CIO. A certain Mrs. Nichols, one of the strikers, was arrested by the police on the picket-line on the charge that she had called another woman, one of the non-strikers, "a yellow-bellied scab."

The judge found Mrs. Nichols guilty and sentenced her to 90 days in jail and fined her $250.

Cyril O'Brien, one of the Textile organizers assigned to the strike, told me about another case. Mrs. Vera Blackman was an attractive young woman and the mother of three children. "A really refined, soft-spoken type," Cyril said. She was also a striker.

Leaving the picket-line one day, she took a bus home and on the bus she happened to be sitting next to a woman scab. One word led to another and the scab charged that Mrs. Blackman called her "a scab." She had Mrs. Blackman arrested and tried and the judge sentenced Mrs. B. to 60 days in jail and fined her $200. Because she was a mother, the jail term was suspended. These Southern judges are nothing if not gentlemen.

This is the most amazing thing I ever heard. In this land of the free and the brave a young mother is fined $200 and is considered lucky to have escaped jail because she called a scab a scab. And you know why? Because Virginia, like 16 other states in this country, has one of these jim-dandy new "right-to-work" laws. It seems that when Mrs. Blackman called this scab a scab on the bus going home she was interfering with the scab's right to work. The law says that a striker may not use "intimidating" language in addressing a non-striker. In Virginia the word "scab" is intimidating language, and it doesn't make any diffeernce where you are when you use it.

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IN THE COMMONWEAL of Sept. 14 we discussed here a model "right-to-work" law that is being peddled around the country by Cecil B. DeMille, the movie producer. It has a provision which, for all I know, may be the same as that in the Virginia law under which Mrs. Blackman, Mrs. Nichols and other Danville strikers were sentenced. It says "no person shall hinder or prevent the pursuit of any lawful work or employment by another person either (a) by threats, intimidation, force or coercion. . . ."

We had another column here some months ago on what the Textile Workers were up against in the South. The burden of it was that if the union tried to organize a plant, win a Labor Board election and go ahead peacefully to get a good contract, the textile operators wore them out with a hundred delaying actions and Taft-Hartley technicalities until their members had drifted away in sheer boredom.

The strike at the Dan River mills, the biggest of the 15 textile plants that went out last spring, is typical of what happens when the union tries the other tactic, the use of its last-ditch weapon, the strike. Typical in one sense and yet worse than typical in another.

★

LET me give it to you as O'Brien gave it to me. He saw it from the inside. He was one of the 20 pickets who lay down on the road that leads into the mill one night in order to prevent non-strikers from driving their cars into the mill. He saw it from the inside of the local jail where they spent the rest of the night. He saw it from the inside of the union meeting hall where they had an entertainment for the strikers one evening and one of them called him "a damyankee nigger-lover" simply because he was clowning around with a negro striker in a friendly way.

The Dan River mills have about 12,000 workers. The place is not typical in one respect. The Textile Workers have had a contract there for about ten years. They even had a dues check-off for their members. But even after ten years there were about 4,000 non-union members working in the place.

The strike started April 1. The union was asking for a 16c package, most of it in the form of a cost-of-living increase. In full-page ads the company boasted that its average hourly wage was $1.32, which together with fringe benefits worth about 10c adds up to $1.42. The ad concluded, "No one can characterize this as failing to come up to the standard of a living wage.

Don't look now, Dan River Mills, but there's a man standing right behind you who not only can, but already has, characterized $1.42 an hour as "failing to come up to the standard of a living wage." He is wearing a top hat and a suit made of stars and stripes and he is your own Uncle Sam. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics in Washington will gladly furnish you the figures on what it costs for a man to keep a wife and two children (not to mention four or five) in a town like Danville. And it is considerably more than $56.80 a week, even in Danville. The chances are it is between $65 and $70 a week at least.

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AT ANY rate the Textile Workers called this strike. The first night nearly 2,000 workers crossed the picket lines and went to work as though nothing had happened at all. This struck me as strange. Even O'Brien was at something of a loss to explain it. Perhaps part of it was the union's fault: some failure to prepare the ground properly, or a bad choice of timing. Or perhaps it was a reflection upon the make-up of the Southern worker, exposed as he is to community forces that are about as reactionary as any in the world.

What happened to Mrs. Blackman and Mrs. Nichols is one example. O'Brien showed me a file of clippings

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on the strike from the Danville newspapers. I have rarely seen press coverage of a strike, or any other event for that matter, which made less of an effort to be objective and fair. Perhaps in *The Daily Worker* they yield even less gracefully to prejudice. But it would be a close thing.

In the North when people go on strike the public utilities give them a break. Not in Danville. The strikers had to pay every single gas, electricity and even water bill that came due. And if they couldn't pay it the union paid it for them or the utilities were cut off.

O'Brien pointed out that in the North a striking union can usually get private relief agencies to help at least some of the more obvious cases of need, particularly where children are going hungry. But not in Danville. Even though the textile workers contributed well over half of the money raised by the Community Fund, none of the agencies financed by that fund would raise a hand to help one single hungry child. As one agency official put it, "That would be helping the strikers."

In Danville this was the unforgivable sin: to help the strikers.

By May 6 the strike was thoroughly broken and the Textile Workers sent the last faithful remnants back to work. Some are still not back to work now, five months later. The company has reserved the right not to rehire anyone who was convicted of a law violation during the strike. That includes Mrs. Blackman and Mrs. Nichols, who could not resist calling a scab a scab, and the men who were arrested for lying in the road and so on.

Now five months later no contract has been signed. The company has refused to renew the check-off and other favorable provisions which the union enjoyed before the strike. A mill which the union regarded as one of its few strongholds in the South may yet be lost.

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THINGS may have to get worse in the South before they get better. Not that things are so wonderful in the North, even in the textile industry. In Dighton, Mass., not far from the alleged "cradle of freedom," we have just seen a textile mill owner threaten to close down rather than do business with the Textile Workers. In many ways it is as horrible a story as anything coming out of the South.

But in the North, thank God, a union usually does not have to fight the whole arrayed might of the community and the state government in addition to the already considerable might of the employer.

That is where the battle must now be fought, on the political front. There are many Southerners who refuse to admit that the Civil War is over. They are right. It is not over. It has simply been changed from a war between states to a war between classes. There were bullets fired at Danville last spring. But let us hope that this new civil war can be won by ballots rather than bullets. Otherwise we can expect to see some strong units of the Communist Party in the South within the next two decades. A people cannot long remain half slave and half free. Or has someone said that before?

JOHN C. CORT.

FROM THE BELGIAN CONGO

Out of the Darkness

TO UNDERSTAND something of the life of the natives in the Belgian Congo, one must first realize that this enormous country is inhabited by many tribes speaking completely different languages and, in general, living on different levels of primitive civilization. For centuries these tribes have fought each other, and, if they were left alone now, they would very probably be fighting again. Some of them have, in fact, been saved by the Belgians from complete extermination.

It is naturally very difficult to make studies of the various peoples living in the Congo. Both the Wasengas, who live from fishing in the Congo and who are among the best swimmers and divers in the world, and the Pygmees, who mainly hunt in the Equatorial forest, resist the approach of those who would bring civilization; they submit only after the greatest difficulty to any observation.

Another thing to realize is this: since Western civilization and Christendom came to Africa at first mainly over the seas, those who lived in the vicinity of the seashore first came into contact with the white man. So, for example, in Angola, or Portuguese West Africa, with its shoreline on the Atlantic, the natives have been acquainted with Western ways since the middle of the fifteenth century and today they speak Portuguese; the Congo, however, made its first contact with the white race some seventy years ago and consequently the natives still speak their several languages. It may be argued that the Nile Valley was the classic route leading into Africa, but it is separated from the Belgian Congo by a mountainous and volcanic region which was, before the time of modern transport, extremely difficult to cross.

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WITH the discovery of the great mineral resources in the Colony, which produces more uranium, cobalt and industrial diamonds than any other place in the world, an effort was made to speed up the process of educating these primitive people, of whom there are about eleven or twelve million.

However the native mind, primitive as it is, has not always reacted favorably to Belgian efforts to develop a more advanced way of living through such projects as modernizing fishing, organizing agricultural production and impressing on the native mind the necessity for saving, a notion that is completely lacking among all native

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ANDREW FRANCIS is a European journalist and writer who lives in the Belgian Congo.

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tribes from top to bottom. The exaggerated importance of the present moment, even in comparison with the very next day, is probably one of the greatest obstacles to steady progress in this country. The natives, as different as they may be from tribe to tribe, are all fundamentally fatalists. They believe that evil spirits rule the world and that the fate of every one of us is determined by them. Philosophically speaking, they are never indeterminists.

Every employer who, for instance, tries to persuade his workers to save, will get the same answer: "Why should I save? I can die tomorrow." Owing to the fact that the black man has the habit of spending his monthly wages the very day he gets them, without showing the slightest care about what his family will eat the next day, some employers give him every week a part of his salary to be spent on food only. The mining employers have even been compelled to give food in kind to the wife to prevent her husband from selling it beforehand. Today employers adopt one or the other of these methods of weekly payment. But the rest of the monthly salary, which still constitutes the principal amount over and above the weekly payments, is spent on gramophone records, colored fountain pens or beer, while the children go in rags.

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A FATALIST, the Congolese Negro is, however, deeply religious. As is well known, many scientists have been trying to explain the origin of religion as arising from sources like primitive emotions, fear, an inability to explain some phenomenon, and a lack of scientific knowledge. But such theories cannot explain the black man's attitude toward the spiritual world and toward ethics. The native appears to be to a large extent obsessed with the problem of good and evil and his conscience, if unspoiled, reacts very strongly regarding reward for good deeds and punishment for evil ones.

In this respect, it may be added that the primitive mind does not *believe* in God. It simply treats God or gods and the spiritual world as *realities* as definite and obvious to the primitive as the good or bad air he breathes, even though he does not see the air.

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TO the Negro, the white man appears to be simply a very clever witchdoctor, in the sense that he subjugates the forces of nature. If someone comes to the black man and heals him or his children, or teaches him better methods of fishing or agriculture, he may be suspicious at first, but later he will be extremely grateful. But when a white man lies or steals or hunts in an area subject to a chief's authority without permission, the black man will be angry and his relationship with the European will be hostile.

The Negro respects the white man for his ability and the Negro in the bush has no racial feelings at all. These things come later.

Generally speaking, there are three causes for ill feeling between the whites and the blacks: first, injustice on the part of the white, second, Communist propaganda, which makes headway among these people who are easily impressed and who love anything that has a secret or mysterious aspect about it, and finally, any action taken by the government against the old customs of these tribes, such as poligamy. Sometimes, too, the missionaries, who have done a wonderful work here for practically no material gain, have come into conflict with the local witchdoctors, who fear to lose their prestige.

The organization of native life in the bush is still based on tribal law. But this is no longer true of the towns. About ten percent of the native population of the Congo already has left the bush to make a new life in the industrial and commercial centers organized by the Europeans, that is, within the framework of Western civilization. These natives who work for, or with, the Europeans begin very rapidly to despise their former way of life. They no longer acknowledge the tribal authority of the chiefs and they try to copy the white man in everything. Unfortunately their moral standard usually deteriorates and they become subject to all kinds of propaganda. The spoiled type of black man is usually not found in the bush but rather in the towns. It is a well known fact that one can leave an open car for days in a native village and nothing will be touched, but stealing has become a universal habit in the towns.

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AS for artistic expression, the natives often sketch various animals on the walls of their huts, but the native's art is fundamentally different from the art of America, Europe or Asia. These three continents have a history of art, but central Africa has not. Thus, for the white or yellow student, art is a dynamic process. He can study its evolution and observe its trends. But in central Africa there is no history of art. Art is completely static. The natives express themselves artistically today exactly as they did centuries ago. Their dances are used as a rule on the occasion of initiation to manhood or womanhood, to marriage, hunting, war and at the ceremonies which accompany a burial. Although these dances have been studied by many people from Europe and America, the tribal and religious significance of many of them remains unknown and as hard to explain as the way the dancers fall, while dancing, in a sort of hysteric somnambulism.

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ALL this does not mean that progress is impossible in central Africa. But progress here is not only a matter of money and technology. It is also a matter of understanding that the process will be slow, that one must learn to walk before he runs. There are those who do not know enough about Africa and some of them, at the sessions of the trusteeship council of the UN, want to speed up the process of maturing. This can be of great harm to the natives and to their relations with the West. It is obvious that the native is our brother. Here in Africa, however, we must adopt a paternal atti-

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tude and teach him to live in more modern conditions and to reach a higher standard of living.

Those who want to go too fast are mistaken. Those who deny the blacks the opportunity to make progress are wrong, too. But self-government can be introduced here only when we have in the Congo a large native middle class capable of thinking about its own future and capable of conducting successfully some sort of business or other activity without European direction or administration.

In the Belgian Congo, the government and the Belgian settlers have been very successful in leading the natives without driving them. It is often pointed out here that the Belgians arrived at their own present political and social level after inheriting some 2,000 years of civilization and Christianity. And those who fought at the end of the eighteenth century for American independence had, as a matter of fact, the same ancient civilization and culture as those they fought against. India, having just gained her independence, has an older civilization than Europe. But here in Africa we are just emerging from the Stone Age. And we cannot expect to see the native masses of the Congo arrive in one or two generations at the very level it took the Western Europeans many generations to reach. ANDREW FRANCIS.

The Stage

TWILIGHT WALK

A. B. SHIFFRIN'S new play is, I think, deceptive: it has such a tidy external form that you feel the author has very nearly written a good play, that with just another ounce of energy he might have pushed it over the top. Actually, the piece is hollow in all its parts, its surface competence no more than a matter of well-rehearsed gestures.

The author has here concerned himself with a psychopathic killer who plies his trade in Central Park and who, for awhile, appears to enjoy working directly under the noses of the investigating police. The material has the makings of an effective melodrama. Mr. Shiffrin has shot at something more, however, and missed both the natural content of his materials and the more ambitious target at which he has aimed. It has been his plan to turn the story line into a plea for tolerance, understanding, and pity for the psychopath, to suggest —or, rather, to demand in a declamatory fashion—that such criminality be made the province of the medical profession rather than the police.

There are a lot of things wrong with this. For one, the helpless psychopath is never a very good dramatic subject: he is a victim, his victims are victims, *everybody* is a victim, and there is no moral struggle to interest us. For another, this particular thesis—that the criminal is a sick, rather than an evil, man—is by now a pretty tired one, and Shiffrin comes to it late. It has seen dramatic use before, notably in the magnificent German film "M", and it has also outlived its earlier fashion as social dogma. We bring a somewhat tempered attitude to it now, recognizing that there is truth in the notion but that it is no absolute, and when Mr. Shiffrin gets a little hysterical about police brutality toward the poor killer you can feel a twinge of impatience stir through the audience. Then there is one more, and rather curious, thing wrong with "Twilight Walk" and its labored thesis: for all the rhetoric he brings to bear on the central idea, Shiffrin does not give a very strong impression of believing in it himself. It sounds borrowed throughout the play, as though the author had felt his melodrama might seem trivial unless it were overlaid with some Significant thought, and as though he had merely lighted on this one as serviceable.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Shiffrin's work as a whole —or at least what I have seen of it—has a borrowed air about it. Last season he was toying with the Saroyan mood ("Angel in the Pawnshop") and this season he is writing in a vein so radically different as to suggest that he is trying on everybody else's clothes for size. It seems to me that when a writer turns out pieces which are strikingly unlike one another he is giving grounds for a just suspicion that he has not yet found his style, or that he has not got one. As a rule, we look at this matter the other way round. We are, for instance, forever complaining that Tennessee Williams must have a very limited talent because he always seems to be writing the same play. But this is true only in the sense that Hemingway is always writing the same novel or that Rouault is always painting the same picture. Every good artist repeats himself—frequently to the point of self-caricature—because his insight is intensely personal and because he has found an idiosyncratic, and quite appropriate, manner of revealing it. The trouble with Mr. Shiffrin is that he has no play of his own to write, and so must content himself with playing the field.

The social message is both superimposed and sentimentalized, and the language itself is without interest. The author is always straining after images, but when he gets one you wish he hadn't. I am sorry to be so severe on so hard-working a writer—Shiffrin always has two or three plays being done somewhere—but I think it is time he took a good hard look at himself, decided who he is, and set to work writing something so personal that it will embarrass him to have it produced. If he doesn't, I think he is going to go right on having failures.

Richard Krakeur has given the play a thoroughly respectable production. Paul Stewart has directed with all the ease and warmth the play will tolerate, Ann Shoemaker has great authority in the overly familiar role of the mother, and Walter Matthau is so good as the harrassed, and presumably unfeeling, policeman as to seriously disbalance the intended sympathies of the play. It is more difficult to judge Nancy Kelly's work; she plays a social-minded reporter into whose mouth are stuffed the bald and characterless thesis speeches, and the only sympathy she could generate was for herself as an actress, an actress doing a thankless job. (*Closed at the Fulton*) WALTER KERR.

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The Screen

HITTING PAYDIRT

"SATURDAY'S HERO" is being widely advertised as the "first honest football picture." It isn't quite that. The copy quoted presumably means that the picture admits that good college football teams are bought and paid for. That proposition was not only admitted but enthusiastically insisted upon by a whole string of football pictures made in the thirties and featuring Jack Oakie. There is a difference, of course. The Oakie idea was that this was wonderful; ingenious schemes were developed to pull exceptionally stupid players through examinations and even more ingenious plays were invented on the spur of the moment to win the Big Game. Columbia's idea is that this is depressing; the studio makes its point by arranging the picture in the same key.

About half way through, the neurotic heroine says to the hero, "I always feel that you're just on the point of saying something, but you never do." He struck me that way, too. The hero is a high-school flash, Steve Novak, who gets snapped up by Jackson University in its drive for money and fame, and is All-American material in two years. You figure right from the start, if only because of the posters in the lobby, that there's something wrong with this success story, but if you wait for Steve to tell you, you'll never know what it is. He stands around moodily while other people talk, breaking his silence only in English class, where he recites "St. Agnes' Eve," with no expression at all. On the whole this absence of lines is the best solution I've seen to the problem of what to do with John Derek, but there must be something even better.

The picture opens with a shot of the George Washington Bridge and the Jersey toll station, and that's the last touch of reality it has for a long time. Another is the gay cynicism of Steve's fellow-employees, and the last is a beautiful hint of sadism in the head coach. The rest is rubbish.

What the picture finally gets around to focusing on as the big evil of professional football in the colleges is the unfortunate fact that occasionally some of the boys get banged up. It happens to Steve.

As a matter of fact, putting football on a cash and carry basis has certainly cut down on injuries, somewhat in the way a really mercenary army sees to it that few people get seriously hurt. When the cry was 'Go out and die for dear old Rutgers!', a lot of players did exactly that; the professional has an incentive to live for the next payday.

Steve tries to study engineering and soon learns that his practice sessions just don't give him the time he needs with the books and slide-rule. That's a valid enough objection, and it's the reason why most engineers don't try for the team. But any fair-minded critic must admit that the colleges, most of them, have met the problem by establishing degrees in coaching and playground direction.

The main embodiment of the evil is T. C. McCabe, a rich alumnus, who buys the team for the school. T. C. turns out to be batty. He sends for Steve at odd hours, throws him a cryptic line and dismisses him. He dominates his niece, Melissa, but the girl breaks the bond and finds happiness with Steve at the end. In short, as a type character in a problem picture, T. C. just isn't. He's the power-mad tycoon you've seen in dozens of Columbia pictures; his presence here can only be explained as a filing clerk's error.

The picture ignores more aspects of the problem than it touches: the college administration, for instance. Hutchins used to have the theory that most colleges lost money on professional ball, but "Saturday's Hero" naively assumes that all you have to do is spend money to make money. That isn't true even in pure, as distinguished from academic, economics.

A serious objection to the show is that it gives absolutely no insight into the nature of the game as a game. One thing the camera can do perfectly is to disentangle the confusing array of players on a football field and show you exactly what a play means, what it sets out to accomplish, how it functions to achieve its end, how it can be stopped. Here, since the picture has chosen to focus on an outdated aspect of the game, every play seems to have for its object the making of Steve's life difficult. With such an end in view, naturally so modern a refinement as the platoon system is discarded. Every player plays sixty minutes and spends most of his time suffering physical hurt. There is none of the elation and sense of perfect coordination that even a mercenary, perhaps especially a mercenary, derives from the successful execution of a reasonably clever play.

As indicated above by the reference to Keats, humane letters get dragged in as the answer, along with engineering, to football. I think someone should point out that the engineering schedule itself is so consuming that it leaves most of its students with neither the time nor the taste for literature. Literature is just one more thing that the picture tosses around without knowing anything about.

One simple truth that the first honest football picture rather shrank from is that a lot of football players, with or without a heavy practice schedule, just don't belong in college, and their presence cannot but lower the pressure, the pace and the achievement of their class-mates.

One of the leading Catholic picture magazines recently ran the photo of a couple of imprisoned basketball players with the caption: "This is the result of materialistic, secular education." That's probably the heart of the problem, though you can't expect Columbia to say so. Or again, as the reverend owner of one of our better teams used to say, "After all, if we didn't take these boys here, they'd be getting a pagan education elsewhere."

FRANK GETLEIN.

FRANK GETLEIN has served as movie critic for the Davenport Catholic Messenger. Philip T. Hartung is on vacation.

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Of Note

Australian Bishops' Statement

THE annual social justice statement of the Archbishops and Bishops of Australia this year deals with the relationship of that sparsely settled sub-continent with the overpopulated Asiatic mainland. It says, in part:

> The survival of Australia as an independent nation for the fifty years since Federation must appear as an historical anomaly. To the north of Australia lie a thousand million people suffering from a dreadful poverty which must be seen to be realized.
>
> In this Australian sub-continent of Asia there live a few paltry millions of Europeans who, in the very worst times and at the very lowest standards, have lived a life which to the downtrodden inhabitants of Asia would seem to be one of unbelievable ease and comfort. . . .
>
> Is there any valid moral reason why we should strive for the survival of Australia as a nation predominantly European? The answer to this question is all-important.
>
> The moral justification of Australia's survival will not simply be found in Australia's own achievement. This achievement, great in many respects, has been marred in others by manifestations of human frailty of which we can hardly be proud.
>
> We have refused to populate this country. Contraception has ravaged our population. We have denuded the land and crowded our people into great cities.
>
> Nor will the necessary justification be found in any false assumption of racial superiority which too often underlies the so-called White Australia Policy.
>
> In fairness, it should be admitted that there is merit in the economic argument which has been used to justify this policy—that the mass migration of Asian peoples to Australia might be used by sinister forces to establish a cheap labor market to the detriment both of native Australians and of the newcomers.
>
> The absolute exclusion of Asian migrants has little relation, however, to this economic argument and can hardly be justified.
>
> In the last analysis, there is only one valid argument which will evoke the great sacrifice which will be needed to preserve Australia as a nation of primarily European texture. With all its defects, Australia is still to a considerable degree a Christian country.
>
> The program of European migration which is already under way will add greatly to the strength of the Christian elements in this country.
>
> If these European migrants are properly absorbed into the Australian community, within a century Australia can become a great Christian commonwealth.
>
> A Christian nation located so close to Asia as Australia is, could be a major force in the conversion of Asia to Christianity.
>
> But if Australia were absorbed by Asia within the next twenty years, it would be the absorption of a nation the basis of whose institutions is still largely Christian by peoples who, through no fault of their own, are still pagan.
>
> It would be the elimination of a Christian culture by a pagan culture.
>
> It is clear, however, that the Christian culture of Australia will not be saved if it is only nominally Christian.
>
> Is there a touchstone by which the true depths of Australia's Christian spirit can be gauged by Asian and Australian alike?
>
> There is. As ever, the Christian spirit of a people will be judged by the charity which it manifests.
>
> As a Christian people, and as part of the Western world, our duty towards Asia is clear. Asia suffers from an unbelievable poverty among its hundreds of millions of people.
>
> In South and Southeast Asia—those regions with which through the simple facts of geography we are most intimately connected — the great scourges of poverty, of starvation and of disease have reached depths which Europeans cannot begin to visualize.
>
> Yet, it is not that South and Southeast Asia do not possess the resources from which their teeming millions can be maintained. "The human and material resources of the area are large enough to solve its problems," declared the Commonwealth Consultative Committee (representing, among others, a number of Asian Governments) which evolved the Colombo Plan.
>
> What is needed to enable Asia to maintain its millions is the development of its own great untapped resources. Asia's need is to bring under cultivation great tracts of land at present untouched by the plough, to irrigate lands with insufficient rainfall, to increase industrial power capacity, to expand and develop the present rudimentary transport services, to provide the beginnings of the industrial plant which Asia lacks, and to train technical experts in the skills which will be needed to achieve all these things. . . .
>
> The salvation of Asia—and the consequent preservation of this country—will be achieved only if the Western World continues to realize its duty in Christian charity to the poor and oppressed people of that great continent; only if it acts in the knowledge that this is a moral issue and not primarily an economic or a political matter.
>
> If we refuse to accept the needy millions of Eu-

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rope because it may possibly involve some temporary lowering of our own living standards, we shall discover that in our selfish attempt to hoard everything for ourselves we have doomed Australia to destruction and lost everything we value.

Australians must raise the level of public opinion within their community and thus automatically demand a higher level in public life. Thus, when great financial sacrifices must be made in the interests of our Asian neighbors, no vested interest or sectional group will be allowed to stand in the way.

They must arouse the public conscience of the Western World, convincing it that the most remote Asian peasant is a brother to the citizens of the West and entitled to their fraternal aid.

The Sense of Wonder

IN the Michaelmas number of the *Catholic Art Quarterly* (4380 Main St., Buffalo 21, N. Y.), Margaret Townsend O'Brien writes about primitive art and the element of wonder:

> There are two kinds of wonder: that of ignorance, which is inevitably dispelled by science, and that of wisdom, which is abiding. Perhaps it would be better to retain the element of wonder in our lives even at the price of darkest ignorance, if this choice were forced on us. But for the western mind today all discussion of this question is and must remain purely academic. Those who discuss it are themselves irrevocably moulded by their own background, and, if not always wise, have certainly lost forever the untutored ignorance of Wordsworth's pagan or the Noble Savage. Deliberate and self-conscious efforts to recapture a primitive outlook in art or in life are too apt to produce only increased cmplexity, and our one hope of regaining simplicity is to become wise. The extreme primitivist, who has usually a complex and sophisticated mind, embarks on a hopeless quest; it is better to seek the wonder of wisdom, whose sources always surround us no matter how much we know or in what age we live.
>
> Two ways of enquiry lie open: two approaches, which we may call the psychological and the ontological. It is impossible to describe what wonder is: for it implies a stillness, a fullness, a simple and essentially contemplative absorption that refuses to be broken down into words. Indeed, while art and literature and music may reflect it, there is no symbol that can fully express it. . . .
>
> Characteristics of wonder as a psychological fact are a peculiar intensity of surprise that does not die away when novelty has gone; a speechlessness that comes from our being aware of more than words can frame; a certain suspension of judgment that means our minds are too engrossed in the being of a thing to start forming propositions about it and an interior fullness combined with reverence. Wonder is terribly awake, yet always unhurried and quiet. It is, on the natural as well as on the supernatural level, contemplation that demands both the passivity and humility to receive a gift from outside ourselves, and the generosity to yield ourselves to the gift. . . .
>
> Something of the flash of interior life and awareness implied in wonder is evoked by anything that captivates our attention by the simple—and mysterious—fact of its being. Thus, what is very big may overwhelm us just because its size fills our whole consciousness, and what is strange may hold us still less in bewilderment than in a sort of contemplation. What is excellent in any order of being may tranfix us by its sheer beauty of form. All these experiences, and especially the last, partake of wonder. But in order to approach nearer to the core of wonder it is necessary to go beyond the limits of psychological enquiry and consider it more metaphysically. Wonder must be approached as a phase, the initial and most important phase, of our contact with reality; and the psychological effects of such contact cannot be studied apart from an effort to grasp their ontological cause. As beauty, which is one of the transcendental properties of being insofar as it pertains to goodness, touches us in the experience we call aesthetic, so does the actual existence of *what is* touch us in wonder.
>
> Wonder springs from the actual presence of an object whose sheer reality fills us without our being able to comprehend it: wonder is contemplation without comprehension. What we can define are particular phases of being but not being itself; and everything, if we gaze far enough into it, brings us face to face with being itself. Furthermore, what we can define is *essence*—not the actuality of being that we call *existence;* there is always more than we can comprehend in anything if we regard it in its totality. If in defining a thing we exhausted its depths, then insofar as we had science we could not have wonder; but since this is not the case no increase of knowledge on our part can essentially constrict the sphere of the wonderful.
>
> Wonder is opposed to science in that it is not definitive knowledge; but like science, and in even a profounder sense, it is a function of intelligence. The brutes have neither a sense of beauty nor the capacity for wonder, for both these follow from the intellect's apprehension of being as such and its transcendental properties. And since man can have only a confused and analogical grasp of these things, it becomes understandable why there must always be in wonder an element of the known and of the unknown. We wonder not at what wholly baffles us, but at what we partly understand and cannot contain or define: wonder comes when the very being itself of things rushes into our minds simultaneously filling and amazing us. And with the capacity for wonder comes sanity, for we must be sane in order to penetrate reality, and the vision of reality is what makes us sane.

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Books

Melville Goodwin, U.S.A. John P. Marquand. Little Brown. $3.75.

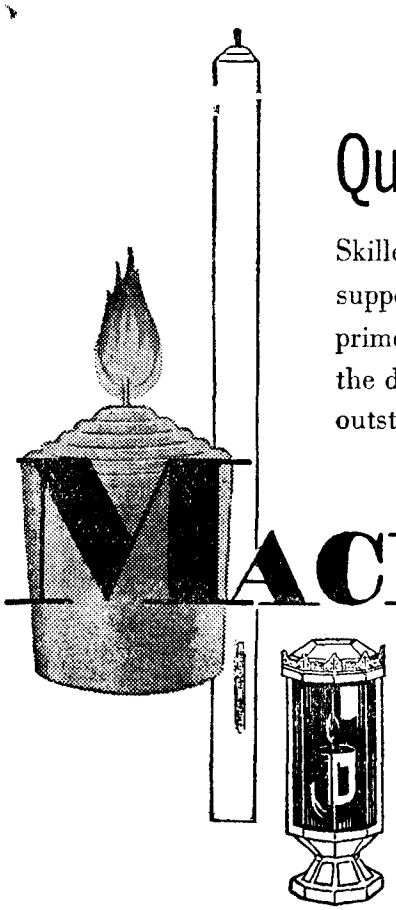
PUBLIC interest in the affairs of generals is currently running high, and the virile, still handsome middle-aged male has recently come into his own. If you should write a novel, then, about a handsome, middle-aged general, home from the wars, and, once home, torn by the conflict between his duty to a quiet and loyally efficient wife and his wild infatuation with a young, glamorous and super-sophisticated New York writer (who herself is fascinated by the charms of the handsome middle-aged general) then you might have hit the formula for producing a best-seller. In his new novel, John P. Marquand has done all this. The book will probably be a great success.

Major General Melville Goodwin was a combat general during the war (and a "damned good one" at that). No one ever really noticed him, though, until one day in occupied Berlin when he accidentally intervened in a flare-up between some Soviet and American troops. His quick discipline and authority, born of experience, averted what might have been a serious international incident, and overnight he became a national figure. The Pentagon, anxious to capitalize on a new Army hero, immediately flew him home. Melville Goodwin seemed headed for big things.

But as soon as he was back in New York, Mel Goodwin looked up Dottie Peale, whom he had known briefly but well "in the freedom of wartime Paris." The general has never known a woman quite like Dottie. She's nothing like his wife, the respectable, circumscribed and all-managing Muriel. (Poor Muriel!) We know, of course, that Dottie isn't really worthy of the general, that she'd soon tire of those soldierly qualities of simple straightforwardness which, at first, fascinate her. But General Goodwin doesn't know this, and for a while it looks as though he might throw everything —career, honor, fame and Muriel— over for the charming Dottie.

We never get too worried, though. We always have a feeling that Melville Goodwin will wake up in time, and he does. Well, he doesn't exactly "wake up," but when his wife sees her husband's career and her own carefully laid plans threatened by this affair, she goes to work in her usual quietly efficient way and arranges for the general's assignment to a top post in occupied Japan. The general himself is as excited as a kid over this turn of events.

"Boy," he said, "I'm slap happy. I still can't believe I'd get anything like this. Boy, the only thing we need now is a war out there, and things don't look so good in China, do they? I've got a hunch it might



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happen in Korea." Dottie Peale is no match for this patriotic fervor, and the novel ends with Melville Goodwin, the "GI's general," safely embarked on what promises to be a brilliant career in Japan.

The story of Melville Goodwin, U.S.A., is told by a young radio commentator, Sidney Swelton. He has his own share of troubles during the course of the novel, but we tend to forget them as we are plunged deeper and deeper into the affairs of General Goodwin. The book runs to almost six hundred pages, and well over half of it is occupied with filling us in on the general's early life and fortunes, on what made him what he is. Not often, even in the contemporary best-seller, does so much add up to so little. If Melville Goodwin in any way represents the military mind (or lack of it)—God help us!

But we needn't really worry on this score, I should think, because *Melville Goodwin, U.S.A.* is not a novel to be taken very seriously. The triteness of its situations is matched by the remarkable simplemindedness of its hero. It follows a formula and may achieve a certain popular success, but one regrets that its author is Mr. Marquand, a writer obviously capable of much better things.

WILLIAM P. CLANCY.

The Mystical Evolution in the Development and Vitality of the Church. Vol. II. John G. Arintero, O.P. B. Herder Book Co. $6.00.

SOME years ago a popular interest in mysticism was almost unknown in America. There was, of course, an elite group inspired by Huxley and Maugham who dabbled in the intrigues of an Oriental pseudo-mysticism. But within the Church there was not to be found, as yet, a *lay* interest in matters contemplative and mystical.

Then came war, and with it great spiritual unrest. In the aftermath, those who could read the signs of our times began to point significantly to the rising leaven of the lay apostolate, to note with approval the surprising number of ex-servicemen who entered monasteries, to read with interest the autobiography of Thomas Merton and his subsequent efforts at popularizing the Garrigou-Lagrange theory of normal Christian contemplation.

It is no longer surprising to open the pages of THE COMMONWEAL and find, almost weekly, publishers' advertisements for new books on contemplation and mysticism. Not all of these, it is true, are written for the lay mind; many are specialists' books. But the phenomenon of their frequent and regular appearance testifies to a trend which is taking on the proportions of a fad. The clergy themselves are boning up on their mystical theology in order to cope with a newly awakened lay elite.

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festations. Poulain's authoritative (and large, and expensive) volume on the graces of interior prayer has been re-issued, and, *mirabile dictu,* is selling. It is not uncommon to find on the bookshelves in the homes of the educated layfolk the complete edition of the *Summa* (this is commonplace, almost *passé*), and side by side those of St. John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila.

How appraise this trend? Shall we conclude that we are in an age of genuine spiritual resurgence, or that this is a mere flash in the pan? Can we assume that a new phase in spiritual development (of a radical nature) has engulfed American Catholicism?

In some ways, this second and concluding volume of Father Arintero's book is an attempt at the appraisal of these popular surges of spiritual activity within the Church. If one can overlook the length of the volume, as well as the labored treatment of a difficult subject in the verbosity and lameness of a florid translation, there is much of real worth. There is much that may help us evaluate the current interest in the contemplative life.

But basically, there seems no reason why the ground previously and adeptly covered in the writings of the mystics themselves, and interpreted for us by such writers as Garrigou-Lagrange, Anselm Stolz, and Poulain should be restated so limply in a book of this size and price. One begins to suspect the publishers of religious books are in danger of running a good thing into the ground. There *is* reason to hope that what is happening spiritually in America may eventually bear the fruit which many predict for it. In the meanwhile we should not let ourselves be misled by over-enthusiasm.

JAMES F. KITTLESON.

The United States and Turkey and Iran. Lewis V. Thomas and Richard N. Frye. Harvard University Press. $4.25.

BEFORE the Second World War, Turkey, Iran and other countries of the Middle East seemed too far away for the average American to bother about. The division of the globe into two power blocs has changed this situation. The Eastern Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf are waters where U. S. influence reaches farther east than anywhere in Europe. As the Middle East is the bridge between our positions in Europe and our defense line in the Pacific these areas may prove to be crucial. Thus Turkey and Iran came to the fore in all strategical speculations about a Third World War. Americans are understandably interested now in the freedom and welfare of these countries which until recently were the concern only of missionaries or students of Oriental history. A popular introduction to their problems as offered by this book is really in demand.

Turkey and Iran, though neighbors on a relatively small frontier and both countries neighbors of the Soviet Union on a much longer border, are very different in their cultural, economic and political structure. Therefore this book, a volume of

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GERALD VANN, O.P.
in The Commonweal, February 23, 1951

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"The American Foreign Policy Library," edited by Sumner Welles, consists of two monographs by two university professors. The two works have not much in common besides an index and a single book title.

Professor Thomas, who taught at an American institution in Istanbul and served for several years as an adviser to the Turkish Republic, gives reflections about Turkey, past and present. They are colored by his deep belief in the stability of the Kemalist reforms and the definitive role of the Turkish nation as a western bastion. He praises the military abilities of the Turks, but is fully aware that the decision, expressed in the Truman doctrine, to start arming and aiding Turkey means an expensive long-term commitment for the U. S., "for Turkey cannot in the foreseeable future even begin to equip herself with modern weapons or to replace any significant fraction of the equipment she wears out." But Professor Thomas thinks we have to take this risk as Turkey, so he claims, is "certainly the most resolute, independent and stable element and also unquestionably the most democratic and the most western element in a semi-oriental area of widespread political and economic unrest."

EARLIER hopes that American private enterprise and investment would be of immediate and substantial aid to Turkey's economy are largely gone. Most American businessmen hold the clumsy bureaucracy of the Turkish government responsible for this development. But Professor Thomas makes some nice excuses also for these shortcomings; he is convinced that American dollars are being spent in Turkey to our greatest advantage.

Professor Frye's analysis of Iran is more critical. The former research analyst of the Office of Strategic Services frequently compares conditions in Iran with those in other parts of the Middle East and stresses the problematic features in Iran's political and economic life. He is fully aware of the great influence of the

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Soviet Union in Iran that, through the Tudeh party and trained Muscovite agents "is carrying on a systematic, skillful, unremitting campaign of subversion, which not only reaps the benefits of popular dissatisfaction but also sows the seeds of hatred and revolution." In order to fight Communism, we have to provide Iran with another way to overcome oppression and the poverty of the masses. In order to counteract the appeal of Stalin's propaganda we will have to create conditions for economic and social progress on a large scale.

This thought contrasts with our present policy of reserve. To date Iran has tried in vain to get American support on the same scale as Greece and Turkey. The oil crisis makes it evident that time is running out in Asia. We are playing into the hands of the Russians if our approach to the Iranic problems remains piecemeal. In this case all our previous efforts may be wasted.

MAX FISCHER.

One and Holy. Karl Adam. Sheed & Ward. $2.

WHEN management and labor representatives meet at the bargaining table, progress is made if both sides are willing to make concessions. *One and Holy* is an attempt to create an atmosphere of understanding between the Catholic and Protestant Churches. Karl Adam is not asking for a union of churches, but a reunion. His task is not as simple as a negotiator's. He cannot bargain one jot or tittle of his Church's teaching. What is offered to us is not a solution, but an approach to the problem. Like a skillful mediator in a dispute, he tries to get each party to see the good in the other. He tries to get both parties to see that all the blame is not on one side.

In discussing Protestant Churches Karl Adam is chiefly concerned with the period of Luther. He traces the beginnings of the anti-papal feelings which Luther brought to white heat, all the way back to Gregory VII's claim to direct authority over secular affairs. This conflict grew with the centuries, leaving Germany at one time under papal interdict for a period of twenty years. Add to this the scandals of the Avignon period and the great Schism. When popes start excommunicating each other and religious orders, taking sides, split themselves down the middle, one can easily imagine the effect on Christendom as a whole. Then when the Church got back to one pope again, what popes some of them were—Sixtus IV, Innocent VIII, Alexander VI, and Leo X!

In a political campaign it helps much to have a whipping boy. Probably some of us Catholic teachers have used Brother Martin Luther for just that. We may have concentrated on his apostasy, his flight from his monastery and vow of celibacy and fulminations against the papacy, without mentioning "his unfathomable reverence for the mystery of God; his tremendous consciousness of his own sin; the holy defiance with which, as God's warrior, he faced abuse and simony. . . ."

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Those of us engaged in social action will seize upon a few sentences on the last page. "If there cannot immediately be unity of faith, let there at least be unity of love. And this love must and will drive us to work in common in public life and to make common cause in our social, cultural, economic and political duties and interests."

DENNIS J. GEANEY.

My Russian Yesterdays. Catherine De Hueck. Bruce. $2.50.

THIS is a nostalgic book of reminiscences of a life that is no more. Former Baroness Catherine De Hueck, now Mrs. Doherty, who runs Friendship House in Harlem so efficiently, tells of the Russia she knew before the Bolsheviks took over and made what, on the whole, was formerly a God-fearing people into a godless nation. We have, to be sure, no way of knowing whether the peasant and his life and ways, as are described by the author in great detail, and with great affection, have survived the ordeal to which they have been subjected by the Communist despots. Obviously, however, life as Mrs. Doherty recalls it is something worth cherishing, especially in comparison to what passes behind the Iron Curtain today.

With some warmth of feeling, and with a simplicity of sentiment, the author tells us about a simple folk who, apparently, in spite of toil and hardship, got more out of life than we do. They got something out of it not to be measured by the yardstick of progress. Faith has much to do with it. For one thing, this life and this faith have held the family together. As for the rest the author writes about Russian lore, customs, religious feasts, pilgrimages, marriage, cooking and baking; even about the use of herbs. Above all, "Russian lives were lived in the shadow of prayer." Over every page of this book hovers the spirit of homesickness.

JOHN COURNOS.

• REVIEWERS •

WILLIAM P. CLANCY has taught English at Notre Dame and at Detroit University.

REV. JAMES F. KITTLESON is a parish priest and a teacher in Miles City, Montana.

MAX FISCHER is on the faculty of the New School for Social Research in New York.

REV. DENNIS J. GEANEY, O.S.A., teaches at St. Thomas High School in Rockford, Ill.

JOHN COURNOS is a short-story anthologist and a reviewer for the New York *Times*.

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